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OBITUARY.

JEAN BAPTISTE CAMILLE-COROT.—The famous French artist "Le Père Corot," as the painters of Paris and its environs familiarly called him, died in that city February 23d, and was buried two days later. Corot, although in his seventy-ninth year, had lost none of the vigour of his youth, and his pencil fell from his nimble fingers only when stricken by death. Yesterday, as it were, France wept for the loss of her greatest figure-painter, Millet, while to-day her school of art has incurred another and almost irreparable loss in the death of Corot. During the past few years the hand of death has fallen with crushing force upon the school of French art. Regnault and Fortuny, although natives of Spain, were proud to be numbered among its members, and their loss is mourned equally with that of Millet, and of his contemporary and friend Corot. Corot was born in Paris, July 17, 1796, and received his early scholastic education in Rouen, but, after a short season, was apprenticed to the service of a cloth-merchant, where he remained until he had entered his twenty-sixth year. He then turned his attention to Art, and commenced his studies under the direction of Michallon, but soon left that artist and entered the *atelier* of M. Bertin. Corot continued his studies under the direction of this master several years, and then went to Italy. His first pictures, exhibited in the Paris *Salon* in 1827, owing to their peculiar treatment, did not find favour with the public, although the artists of the day saw in them evidences of a genius which would, in due time, add additional honour to French art. Notwithstanding this want of appreciation on the part of the patrons of Art, who could not understand his broad and vigorous style and the almost total absence of detail in his works, Corot laboured with zeal, and in due time his genius received adequate recognition. To the multitude, his pictures, at first sight, appeared like rude and unmeaning sketches, as he cared little for the form of visible Nature as it appeared in the landscape, or the form and colour of a plant or flower, or the shape and variety of a tree, or the various and sometimes gorgeous elements of the sunlit tints which are made use of by many contemporary artists in the composition of pictures; but he rather relied upon the ideal, or upon Nature as he interpreted it for his motive, and he invested his subjects with an expression of sentiment and an earnestness of feeling which won favour in spite of their apparent eccentricity.

At the *Salon* of 1833 Corot received his first public recognition, or medal of the second class. In 1846 he received the decoration of the Legion of Honour; and in 1848 and 1855, medals of the first class. At the Universal Exposition, in 1867, he won the second-class medal, and in the same year was made an officer of the Legion of Honour. It will be seen that Corot received all of the honours that France could bestow upon him but one, and that the Grand Medal of Honour. This medal, at the last *Salon*, was awarded to Gérôme, much to the indignation of Corot's friends, who, some six months ago, caused a large gold medal to be struck in his honour, as a partial atonement for the apparent slight put upon him by the "jury of recompense." Of the peculiar qualities of Corot's refined and delicate art, an English writer has said that the success with which he arrested effects of light and cloud that must have escaped any coarser perception or less skilful touch, renders his work remarkable, even in a purely technical sense. No one had ever so faithfully interpreted the silver tones of sunlight blanched to perfect whiteness by light fleecy clouds, or had caught the spirit of tender sadness that dwells in the grey tones of a landscape not yet brought to life by the sun. Of the beauties of twilight Corot has himself written in the following delightful words: "The sun has disappeared. There only remains in the softened sky a vaporous tint of pale citron. . . . The meadows lose their colour; the trees form themselves into masses brown or grey; the darkened waters reflect the quiet tones of the sky. One begins not to see any more, one feels that all is there. All is vague and confused, and Nature becomes drowsy. Nevertheless the pure air of evening still sighs among the leaves; the birds, those voices of the flowers, utter the prayer of night, and the dew whitens the smooth velvet of the turf." Corot, as may be inferred, was a great student of Na-

ture, and it was his custom to start out in the morning with two canvases for sketching, and, wherever employed, his great umbrella, grey locks, and blue blouse, were features in the landscape. His great pictures are 'The Environs of Florence,' painted in 1839, and now in the museum at Metz; 'The Dance of the Nymphs,' in the Luxembourg; 'View in Italy,' in the museum at Douai, and many others. In the United States his landscapes appear in all of the leading collections.

Corot was a man of the most warm-hearted and kindly disposition, and, on learning, a few days after the death of his friend Millet, that his widow had not received a sufficient pension from France for her support, generously settled the sum of one thousand francs a year on her for life. Corot was never married, we believe, and died in the possession of a handsome competency.

WILLIAM J. HAYS.—This well-known and brilliant artist, of New York City, died after a long and painful illness, on Saturday, March 13th, in the forty-fifth year of his age. Mr. Hays had been a sufferer from a disease which baffled the skill of his physicians for years; but until late last fall he continued his studio-work with unabated zeal, and thus, in his absorbing love for Art, sought to forget his intense bodily pain. Mr. Hays, in his boyhood-days, was greatly afflicted with disease, and it was at this time, when confined to the house, that he first became inspired with a love for Art, and began to practise with his pencil the rudiments of the profession in which, in after-life, he became so eminent. From this early beginning he made a rapid advance, and with no teacher, but guided by the dictates of his own genius, he soon acquired renown as an artist, and as one of the most devoted students in the profession.

Although Mr. Hays was one of the most able painters in the country, his fame, except among connoisseurs, did not extend much beyond the limits of his native city; and this arose from the fact that, of late years, he withheld his pictures entirely from the public exhibitions. He was a close student, and never sought after academic honours. In 1860 he visited the Colorado and Rocky Mountain region, where he spent six months in the study of its grand scenery, its wild animals, and natural history. This period may be said to have opened a new era for him in Art, and he became an enthusiastic animal-painter, in connection with the primeval landscapes which he had studied. Mr. Hays was one of the first artists of any great ability who had visited the Rocky Mountain region, and his account of the wild and original beauty of the scenery of the Pacific slope was undoubtedly the means of turning the attention of the profession in that direction, and of inducing its members to seek those new but distant fields for the exercise of their pencils.

His studies, made during this long trip or ramble, possess unusual value; and those of the animals of the region are particularly spirited, and have not been excelled by any other American painter. Mr. Hays's largest picture of 'The Wounded Buffalo' has been classed among the great works of the day. As many will remember, the subject represents a wounded buffalo, with an arrow sticking in his side, running on the prairie, and his path beset with wolves, who are lurking in the tall grass, apparently impatient for their expected meal. This picture, we believe, was always retained by the artist in his studio, where it remained at his death. Another great animal-picture illustrated a stampede of buffaloes on the prairie, and was painted by the artist from actual personal knowledge of the scene. Mr. Hays also painted numerous landscapes with deer; and, indeed, almost every animal known on the American Continent had been faithfully studied by him. Occasionally he left his animal studies, and turned his attention to flowers; and in this specialty his pencil appeared to be equally gifted. A composition of "Orchids," giving upwards of seventy varieties of that superb flower, was painted by Mr. Hays two or three years ago, and showed the most delicate fancy in its arrangement and coloring.

Mr. Hays was an ardent collector of objects of natural history,

in relation principally to the beasts and birds of North America, and his collection of antlers was unquestionably the finest in the country. In his relations of life, Mr. Hays enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the entire profession. He was strong in his convictions, and when an opinion was once formed by him, which was always after mature deliberation, no argument could swerve him from his conclusions. This trait of his character was looked upon by strangers as a repelling element, but to his friends and acquaintances it was felt to be the expression of a spirit in the man which led in the direction of right and truth only, and as such was respected. The same traits of character might be observed in his pictures. He made his studies from Nature, and Nature he considered a better guide to follow than human instruction, hence he

finished his pictures with great conscientiousness, and solely according to the dictates of his own mind. Mr. Hays was one of the first artists to occupy a studio in the Tenth-Street Studio Building, and at the time of his death was president of the colony of painters, who were tenants in it. He was a member of the Century Club, and of several scientific associations, in all of which he enjoyed the respect of his fellows, not only on account of his professional ability, but also for his fine social qualities, and that his death has left a void which cannot be easily filled, there is no doubt.

His funeral took place on Tuesday, March 16th, and was attended by the entire fraternity of artists in New York, and also a large number from the neighboring cities.

NOTES FROM ABROAD.

FLORENCE.—The fourth centenary of Michael Angelo, which should have been celebrated on the anniversary of his birth (March 6, 1475), has been postponed until September. It was first proposed to hold the celebration in May; but, that being a month in Italy consecrated to study, it has been deemed advisable to delay it until September, which, on the contrary, is holiday-time not only here but very generally throughout the Continent. Another reason is the incompleteness of several works connected with the celebration. The 'David' of Michael Angelo, which he placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, has been removed on account of the injuries to it caused by the weather, and a hall is now being prepared for it in the Royal Academy, but cannot be ready until September. The Piazza Michael Angelo is also incomplete. All visitors to Florence know the beautiful drive called the Colli, made by the municipality round the hills to the south of the city, which were formerly covered with vineyards. The road commences at the Porta Romana, and winds upwards till it reaches San Miniato; beyond it this widens into a large terraced piazza, from which is seen an extensive view of the town and Val d'Arno. In the centre of this piazza has been placed a bronze cast of the 'David,' and, on the pedestal, casts of the four figures representing Day and Night in the Medici tombs. The drive continues beyond the piazza, making a gradual descent, and re-entering the town by the Porta San Niccolò. The incomplete part is a drive and flight of steps leading directly up the hill from this gate to the piazza, which is immediately above it. The manner of celebrating the centenary is still undetermined, but some of the festivities will take place on the Piazza Michael Angelo. The life of Michael Angelo, by Signor Commendatore Aurelio Gotti, containing the documents bequeathed to the nation by the last descendant of the Buonarrotti, was expected to appear, the first volume in March, and the second, probably, in April. An English edition, containing the same documents, by Mr. C. Heath Wilson, will, it is believed, be published on the occasion of the actual celebration.

ROME.—At the excavations on the Esquiline Hill, in the gardens of Mecænas, the workmen have been singularly successful, and have rescued from the ruins of an old wall several statues, conspicuous among which is one of Venus, in the purest of Parian marble. Like the Venus of the Capitol, this is wholly nude, and presented under the aspect of a young girl of seventeen or eighteen years. As she stands the feet approach each other, the left drawn backwards a few inches, with the heel slightly raised. The right arm is elevated, and its hand rests behind the head against a knot of hair, around which, and sustained by the left hand, are folds of many-wreathed ribbon. The head is gently turned towards the right, and bends forward, so that, as seen in front, it is presented in a three-quarter view. Marvellous purity and correctness of line are manifested in this work; its modelling is faultless, its contour exquisitely delicate. It has unfortunately been fractured in the neck, above each knee, and at the left ankle; the nose also is slightly injured. It is to be hoped that careful castings may render

the world familiar with this example of sculpture, which, according to report, is of the very highest interest. The other sculptures discovered are as follows: a Bacchus, heroic size, the limbs wanting, but the right arm and hand preserved, the latter resting on the ivy-wreathed brow; two Tritons, half-statues rather than busts, the heads covered with massive curling hair, in which are vestiges of gilding, and the broad chest of one of them clothed with fishy scales; the Emperor Commodus, as Hercules, a half-length statue, heroic size, of very elaborate execution. The right hand holds the club, and the left the apples of the Hesperides, while the head is covered or hooded over with a lion's hide. The countenance is recognisable as a portrait of the emperor by its resemblance to many extant busts. Two draped female statues, life-size, conjectured to be Erato and Terpsichore; and a female head, with hair gathered in a diadem-like knot, supposed to be meant for Aphrodite, were also among the treasures excavated.—An interesting incident at Rome has also been the opening for inspection of the lamented Fortuny's studio. A corridor or passage, artistically embellished, and a staircase hung with ivy, led to the studio, which appeared in that magnificent disorder peculiar to some artists. There were on the walls water-colour drawings, unfinished sketches, and the cartoon of the most important of his works, 'The Battle of Tetuan.' Fortuny had collected many art-treasures, and his studio was a wonder of tapestries, rare china and glass, arms, armour, and rich draperies. This interior was once painted by Fortuny in a picture exhibited at a recent *salon*.

EDINBURGH.—The Royal Scottish Academy gave an exhibition at Edinburgh in February. It is claimed that it is in pure landscape, and landscape with figures, that the Scotch school is strongest. Among the more conspicuous landscapes in the exhibition were 'Head of Glen Ogle' and 'The Hill Fank—Clipping-Day,' by Mr. John Smart. The loneliness of the landscape in the first picture is relieved by herds of cattle, which are introduced with great skill and effect, and in the second by figures and a cottage on the hill-side. Mr. Smart always paints wild or barren scenery with variety of effect. Sir George Harvey contributed a composition entitled 'Scenery in the Highlands,' which as a composition is good. 'Carting Sea-weed,' by Mr. A. D. Reid, is a simple theme skilfully treated, consisting of a cart, a horse, two or three figures, all grouped together in the centre of a large canvas against a flat, grey sky. 'Kelp-Burners in Gigha,' by Mr. J. Oswald Stewart, is a noteworthy work. 'The Potato-Harvest,' by Mr. Lawson Wingate, suggested the character of subjects in which the French painter, Millet, was so famous, but without recalling his power. 'Resting; a Scene in Surrey,' by Mr. John Reid, represents a girl of some twelve years walking in a garden; it is openly and strongly painted. 'With the Spae-wife,' by Mr. Hay, was among the noticeable of the works of domestic incident. 'Singling Turnips' is another agricultural piece, by Mr. James May, which recalls the style of Jules Breton. Alma-Tadema's 'Cleopatra' was in the exhibition.